

In the claims:

1-43. Canceled.

1 ~~44.~~ (Previously presented) An isolated polypeptide comprising:

- (a) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 148; or
- (b) the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 148, lacking its associated signal peptide;

~~wherein said polypeptide induces chondrocyte proliferation.~~

2 ~~45.~~ (Previously presented) The isolated polypeptide of claim ~~44~~¹ comprising the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 148.

3 ~~46.~~ (Previously presented) The isolated polypeptide of claim ~~44~~¹ comprising the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 148, lacking its associated signal peptide.

47-49. Canceled.

4 ~~50.~~ (Previously presented) A chimeric polypeptide comprising a polypeptide according to Claim ~~44~~¹ fused to a heterologous polypeptide.

5 ~~51.~~ (Previously presented) The chimeric polypeptide of Claim ~~50~~⁴, wherein said heterologous polypeptide is an epitope tag or an Fc region of an immunoglobulin.